

FEMA 101

Overview

This document was developed to assist folks who do not or have not worked with FEMA as it relates to Wildland fires. This document is not intended to be all inclusive of all needed FEMA information. Please contact your State Forestry Department for questions and clarification.

Definitions

Fire Management Assistance Grant Program (FMAGP) = The federal grant program administered by FEMA to provide financial assistance related to eligible wildland fires

Grantee = the State Agency responsible for managing the FMAGP

Sub-grantee = State, county and local governments involved in an eligible wildland fire that may be eligible for FMAGP assistance

Principal Advisor (PA) = Federal fire employee who is the representative for FEMA in verifying the information provided on the declaration request form

Governors Authorized Representative (GAR) = State Grantee employee designated by the Governor of the State to request FMAGP assistance from FEMA

Eligible Incident Period = the period of time that FEMA agrees to provide assistance.

Incident Support Cost = the rate assessed per line personnel for meals and logistical support.

Conflagration (Oregon State only) = When the need for structural protection in a rural fire district exceeds that of the local, mutual aid, and county jurisdiction, the County Fire Chief may request statewide mobilization of structural resources from the Oregon State Fire Marshal. The structural resources ordered by the OSFM will be managed by an OSFM IMT and will be paid by the OSFM. Incident support costs for these conflagration resources should be documented on a cost share agreement. If a federal agency is managing the fire, they should invoice ODF on behalf of the OSFM. ODF will then invoice OSFM. Federal Agencies have not authority to invoice OSFM directly as OSFM is not a party to the Cooperative Master Agreement.

1. ELIGIBILITY

- 1.1. **What** creates a potential FMAGP eligible incident? A wildfire that would create major catastrophic economic injury and threatens:
 - 1.1.1. A community – this is not limited to residential homes but also includes businesses, roads and bridges, utilities and other infrastructure
 - 1.1.2. Environmental Resources – can include watersheds, fishing streams and spawning sites, flood control areas and others
 - 1.1.3. Cultural Resources
- 1.2. **Where** does the fire have to be in order to be eligible? Any jurisdiction is eligible. If BPA (federal entity) power lines on federal land are threatened and the loss of those lines would create economic injury to communities, then it may be eligible. If a large subdivision of primary homes is threatened and loss of those homes would create economic injury, it may be eligible. If a community's drinking water reservoir is threatened and other drinking water resources are not available, it may be eligible. There is often confusion over the rule that federal agencies do not qualify for FEMA and that is correct. Federal agencies will not be able to submit a reimbursement request for their suppression costs. However, other eligible entities involved with the fire would be. **Rule of thumb: if you think it could create a financial or logistical hardship on a community, work with your local ODF district/ODF Salem Operations to determine if a declaration request should be made.**
- 1.3. **When** does an incident become FMAGP eligible? A declaration request has to be submitted at the time of the threat to the Community, environmental resources, and/or cultural resources. Take into consideration the movement of the fire, past history of fire growth in the area, forecasted weather, lack of resources to fight the fire due to other incidents, etc. as you think about starting the declaration request. If in doubt, start the process early and make connection with your State Governor Authorized Representative (GAR) to get the incident on their radar.
- 1.4. **Who** is eligible? State, County and local governments are eligible for partial reimbursement of paid expenses incurred in direct suppression or support of a declared FMAGP incident during the eligible incident period while doing their agency mission.
- 1.5. **Why** should you be concerned with FMAGP and assisting in requesting a declaration? If a wildland fire receives a FMAGP declaration, eligible sub-grantees can receive financial assistance to recover a percentage of eligible costs.
- 1.6. **How** do you help? See #2.

2. THE FMAGP DECLARATION

- 2.1. **What** information is needed? See the attached Roles & Responsibilities for a FMAGP Declaration and the Decision Checklist – Attachments A & B
- 2.2. **Why** is this information necessary? It demonstrates the potential for economic or logistical injury to a community if additional funding is not made available to increase resources suppressing the fire.
- 2.3. **Who** is responsible for the declaration process?
 - 2.3.1. The Incident Commander (IC) has the responsibility to determine if a potential threat exists. The IC or delegate then must contact the local ODF District Forester to facilitate the request to ODF's Salem Operations
 - 2.3.2. Salem Operations will then work as the conduit between the District Forester or IC, the Principal Advisor, and the Regional FEMA office to process the declaration request.

2.3.3. The Principal Advisor is a USFS employee who acts as the eyes and ears of FEMA to determine if the request submitted by the State (ODF) is legitimate.

- 2.4. **Where** does the information go? The Decision Checklist will be forwarded to the States GAR who will send the declaration request to the Regional FEMA office in Bothell, WA and to the Principal Advisor (PA) at their designated location.
- 2.5. **How** does the declaration get declared? Once the PA has submitted their information to the regional FEMA office, the regional FEMA office will submit their request with a recommendation to the National Headquarters in Washington, DC. They will make a decision and send it back to the Regional FEMA office which will contact ODF Operations, who will contact the incident.
- 2.6. **When** does the declaration happen? The request must be submitted at the time the threat is in existence. It can take hours, shifts or days to get a declaration approved.

3. DECLARATION HAS BEEN DECLARED – NOW WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW AND/OR DO?

3.1. Finance

- 3.1.1. Eligibility period – this is the period in which FEMA will provide assistance to eligible entities. The beginning of the eligible incident period will be negotiated between FEMA, the Principal Advisor and the State GAR. It is not unusual for the start date and time to be retro-active. The end of the eligible incident period is also negotiated.
- 3.1.2. Separation of costs – It will be necessary to be able to provide the specific resources that were working during the eligible incident period. Be aware that the start and end of the eligible incident period may not be in-line with I-Suite's 0001 to 2400 clock. In this scenario, it is recommended that you document the process that will be used to include/exclude resources based on shift time versus eligible incident period. Example: The eligible incident period is negotiated to begin at 0600. A determination is made that any resource who worked at least 6 hours of their shift during the incident period for that day will be included.
- 3.1.3. Cost Share/FEMA reimbursement – A FMAGP declaration has NO impact on any cost share negotiation/agreement between agencies on an eligible incident. FMAGP only assists eligible agencies after they have paid all costs that are the responsibility of their agency.
- 3.1.4. Coding on shift tickets – If ODF is involved in a FMAGP declared incident, ODF will provide a different PCA code for resources to use during the eligible incident period. The financial code (project number) of the incident will not change due to a FMAGP declaration.
- 3.1.5. Forest Protective Association (FPA) resources – The FPA resources utilized on a FMAGP eligible fire are not eligible for direct FEMA assistance due to their non-profit status. In the case of a FMAGP eligible fire, the FPA resources become a contractor to ODF. Operationally there is no difference in their authorities or availability.
- 3.1.6. Conflagration resources – These structural protection agencies are managed by a Oregon State Fire Marshal (OSFM) IMT. The fire departments will be responsible for their own timekeeping, etc. The conflagration resources typically are supported by incident camp for food, etc. The incident support cost should be documented on a cost share agreement. The OSFM IMT FSC will provide the incident finance section with a daily head count of those being supported by the incident camp. On the day of mobilization and demobilization, the OSFM will only pay ½ of the daily incident camp support cost based on the time of arrival/departure.

3.2. Operations

- 3.2.1. Pre-positioned State resources – These are aircraft resources that are on availability contracts using a special purpose appropriation (SPA) funding from the Oregon State Legislature. If these resources are ordered and used for at least one operational assignment, the State may be able to receive reimbursement from FEMA for up to 21 days of pre-positioning costs. This is valuable to all agencies as it provides additional funding to keep these resources available for a longer period of time for all cooperative agencies.
- 3.2.2. Forest Protective Association (FPA) resources – The FPA resources utilized on a FMAGP eligible fire are not eligible for direct FEMA assistance due to their non-profit status. In the case of FMAGP eligible fire, the FPA resources become a contractor to the ODF. Operationally there is no difference in their authorities or availability.
- 3.2.3. Conflagration/Mobilization resources – are ordered via a request from the Fire Chief to the State Fire Marshal. The conflagration structural resources will be managed by an OSFM IMT. The OSFM Incident Commander should be working with the Incident IC.
- 3.2.4. Agency missions – Other government agencies who support a wildland fire have specific mandates to provide a specific service. If these agencies are performing tasks within their mandate, they should not be paid by the incident. If you need the agency to provide a service that is outside of their mandate, a resource order needs to be completed and payment by the incident is appropriate. Keep in mind that you should not resource order an agency to perform mandated tasks – you should communicate your concerns (road hazard, security risk) but it is up to that agency who has responsibility as to whether to or how to respond. Example: The incident feels the traffic on the highway near the incident is at risk due to smoke or impeding fire. A call to the local ODOT office expressing the concern is appropriate. It is the responsibility of ODOT to determine if they will respond and to what level of action they will provide. However, if the incident needs a brush cutter to assist with reducing fuels ahead of the incident, this is not a mandated task of ODOT and a resource order should be done to request their service.
- 3.2.5. Notification of fire status – throughout the fire incident, communication with the State GAR is necessary to facilitate the communication with FEMA and the determination of the end of the eligible incident period.

4. Declaration has ended – what now?

4.1. Finance

- 4.1.1. Change coding back to pre-FEMA incident coding if ODF changed the fire coding at the beginning of the FEMA incident

4.2. Operations responsibilities

- 4.2.1. There should be no impacts to Operations once a declaration has ended.

5. What if individuals or other agencies want to know how to apply for FEMA?

- 5.1. Individual land/home owners are not eligible for FEMA reimbursement in case of wildfire with one exception; that would be a Presidential Declaration on a wildfire which would make it eligible for Public Assistance. These are rare and usually only occur when you see hundreds of homes being destroyed by wildfire. If a wildland fire does receive a Presidential Declaration, it will be widely publicized and information on who to contact will be provided.

- 5.2. Other government agencies that took part in any suppression or emergency services (evacuations, road closures, etc.) may be eligible for FEMA reimbursement. Within 30 days of the end of the eligibility period, an applicant briefing meeting will be held within the County of the fire. The County Emergency Management office will provide logistical arrangements for the meeting, including notifying all potential applicants of the meeting.
- 5.3. If this information is not sufficient for the person asking, please refer them to the County Emergency Management office or to Cindy Smith or myself @ ODF.
6. What happens after the fire?
 - 6.1. Applicant briefing – ODF will work with Emergency Management to notify all potential eligible applicants regarding a meeting to inform them of eligibility rules and documents that will be needed to apply for FMAGP assistance. This meeting occurs within 30 days of the end of the eligible incident period.
 - 6.2. Payment of expenses – all potentially eligible expenses that are the responsibility of the agency, must be paid in full before a request for reimbursement can be submitted.
 - 6.3. Sub-grantee claims - FMAGP rules allow only 5 months from the start of the eligible incident to pay all costs and submit reimbursement request with supporting documentation. ODF and a FEMA representatives work with the sub-grantees to prepare the reimbursement request.
 - 6.4. Grantee claims – ODF has nine months to make payment of all responsible charges and submit a claim for reimbursement.
 - 6.5. As FEMA approves the reimbursement requests, monies are sent to the Grantee for distribution to sub-grantees.

Notes:

- FMAGP currently provides 75% reimbursement of paid eligible expenses. However, an agency can use donated resources to offset their 25% cost share. These donated resources are typically volunteer labor during the eligible incident period.

Contact Information:

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ROLES AND INFORMATION FOR A FIRE MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE DECLARATION

GOVERNOR'S AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE (GAR) OR ALTERNATE

- Complete the following information on the FEMA form 90-58
 - Box 1 Name of State
 - Box 2 Date of Request
 - Box 3 Time of Request
 - Box 4 Name of GAR or Alternate completing request, contact numbers
 - Box 5 Agency Represented, address
 - Box 6 Signature, Title, Date
 - Box 8 Number of wild fires in the state (all jurisdictions) and in the area of this fire
 - Box 9 Indices
 - Box 10 State and local burn bans
 - Box 11 National watches and warnings
 - Box 12 Time of Report of fire

THE DISTRICT FORESTER AND/OR INCIDENT NEEDS TO PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING

- Complete the following information on the FEMA form 90-58
 - Box 7 Existing Fire Danger Conditions and predictions for next 24 hours in box 7d
 - Box 13 Name of Uncontrolled Fire
 - Box 14 Date Fire Started
 - Box 15 County of location of uncontrolled fires (be sure to list all Counties)
 - Box 16 Acres burning by jurisdiction
 - Box 17 Manpower and Resources committed to fire currently
 - Box 18 Additional resources needed
 - Box 19 Number of people threatened by fire, evacuations prepared, number of person evacuated
 - Box 20 Name and location of threatened communities
 - Box 21 Casualties, injuries
 - Box 22 Number of homes threatened, what percent are primary versus secondary
 - Box 23 Threat to facilities other than homes
 - Box 24 Threat to resources
- Complete the following information on the attached sheet "Additional FMAGP Declaration Information"
 - Cause of the fire
 - Fire Proximity to Structures/Facilities
 - Expected time fire may reach Structures/Facilities based on current conditions, expected conditions, and/or historical burning patterns
 - Has conflagration been declared or in process
 - Natural or Man-Made Barriers (i.e. rivers, roads, etc.)
 - Percent of fire contained currently
 - Expected resources to be committed in the next 24 hour period
 - Other Critical Considerations*:
 - Road closures
 - Other agencies involved for emergency protective purposes

DRAFT

Attachment A

*When explaining the fire threat, include any items that would have a dramatic impact to the community that is threatened. For example, only a small sub-division may be threatened but beyond that sub-division is the communities' primary drinking water source. Perhaps the main power lines for several communities may be impacted by the local fire lines/sub-station being burned. Another factor could be the type of structures/facilities threatened such as the communities, fire department/emergency services facilities which could create unsafe conditions for the community as a whole. Be sure to explain the threat in laymen's terms that non-fire fighters can understand. In otherwords, provide information that paints a picture for someone who does not understand fire behavior (i.e. one hour from reaching subdivision versus 12 miles from subdivision).

FMAGP Decision Checklist

EVALUATION FACTORS

- Community Threatened/Population
- Number of Persons Evacuated
- Evacuations Mandatory or Voluntary
- Number of Residences/Businesses threatened
- Threat to Facilities (building, roads & bridges, infrastructure, utilities, recreation, equipment, etc.)
- Threat to Resources (watershed, irrigation, flood control, fishing streams & spawning sites, wildlife, environmental resources, cultural resources, economic injury, etc.)
- Fire proximity to structures/facilities
- Natural or man-made barriers (rivers, roads, etc.)
- Number of Uncontrolled large fires in the State – ALL JURISDICTIONS (draw on resources)
- Other Critical Considerations
- Fire Containment %

PROGNOSIS

- Weather Effects – winds, temperature, humidity
- Fire Behavior
- Indices
- Fire Forecast for next burn period
- State & Local burn bans
- Resources Committed
- Jurisdiction (Federal land, State & private land, Tribal land)

FIRE EVENT INFORMATION

- Name of Fire/Complex
- County/State/Tribe
- Date Fire Started
- Total Acres Burned
- Cause